I. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN HUNGARY
Although the beginnings of modern archaeological fieldwork go back to the early 20th century, genuine planned research projects were only begun in the later 20th century. It must in all fairness be added that a few planned excavations can be quoted from earlier times, for example in the study of medieval monuments in the 1850s and 1860s (Imre Hensziman’s activity in Csanád, Kalocsa, Székesfehérvár and elsewhere) and in the prehistoric studies of the 1920s and 1930s (Ottokár Kadić’s cave excavations and Ferenc Tompa’s settlement excavations). The circumstances of fieldwork in Hungary were no different from those in other parts of Europe and – disregarding the regions east and southeast of historical Hungary – the origins and history of Hungarian archaeology differed little from the emergence of this discipline in Western Europe. Similarly to Hungarian scholarship in general, Hungarian archaeology grew out of imperial scholarship, first of the Holy Roman Empire and, later, of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. National movements played an important role in the emergence of archaeology as an independent discipline, but neither should we neglect the role of ecclesiastic scholars, most importantly of the Jesuits, who played a significant – often an exclusive – role in the early years of university education. It must also be noted – even if it cannot be discussed in detail here – that a Protestant-Catholic conflict characterized scholarship at the turn of the 18th–19th centuries (as well as in the preceding and ensuing periods). This conflict most certainly influenced the early students of archaeology, a field of research that became an independent discipline by the later 19th century. Various antecedents can be named in the development of 19th century archaeology: the archaeological and numismatic collections housed in universities, the impact of the advances made in the natural sciences (especially in geology) and, finally, the ‘naïve’ study of what were believed to be the relics of the national past, one of the results of the nationalist movements (such as the excavations of the ‘Hunnish’ graves at Érd and the investigations at Százhalombatta). Hungarian archaeology of the 1870s and 1880s can be described as having been relatively modern even from a 20th century perspective, owing to its fruitful collaboration with the natural sciences (Fig. 1).

The history of Hungarian archaeology and archaeological fieldwork began much earlier. In 1928, Sándor Eckhart noted that Simon de Kéza, author of the Gesta Hungarorum (written between 1282 and 1285) can be regarded as the first Hungarian archaeologist. To which we may add that he was one of the first Hungarian historians who used archaeological data in his reconstruction of past events. The Hungarian (actually Transdanubian/Pannonian) sources of Simon de Kéza’s narrative of the Huns’ history were the Iron Age tumulus cemeteries at Százhalombatta and the still visible remains of Roman towns and military forts (Brigetio/Szóny, etc). The first mention of a Pannonian inscription can also be found in his chronicle: he believed that a Hun captain called Cuve had been buried in a location marked by a stone statue. This Roman stone relic remained in its original place in the Vál valley southeast of Kajász-szentpéter until 1928, when it was taken to Baracska. The figures of Athena, Bacchus and Juno can be seen on the three sides of the 170 cm high and 60 cm thick altar stone; the fragmentary inscription on the front records that it was erected in honour of Jupiter. A double cross was engraved onto the altar stone sometime during the Middle Ages, probably in the 13th century. This relic is also quoted in a non-Hungarian chronicle. In his Descriptio Europae Orientalis, written in 1308, a French Dominican monk mentioned the “huge marble stone” between Sicambria (Óbuda) and Alba Regalis (Fehérvár) although it is almost certain that the author had not personally seen this relic.

In his reconstruction of past events, Simon de Kéza also relied on various other antiquities beside various remains from the Iron Age and the Roman period. He linked the
horse harness sets and the swords discovered at Mezőörs to a historical event, namely a battle fought in 1051, in which the Hungarians slaughtered Henry III’s German army at this location. (As a matter of fact, the finds probably came from a Conquest period cemetery.)

Simon de Kéza’s archaeologizing historiography was by no means a unique phenomenon in 13th century Hungary. Roman monuments and Iron Age mounds also appear in the *Gesta Hungarorum* of Magister P., written sometime in the 13th century. To Magister P. (the Anonymus) the ruins of Aquincum represented "*civitas Atttilae regis*", King Attila’s town – this was the only town he mentioned beside Veszprém and Savaria – in which Arpad and the seven leaders of the ancient Hungarians had settled and later held a feast in Attila’s palace (*in palatio*). His narrative of the past differed from Kéza’s: the Romans occupied Pannonia after Attila’s death and they ruled it until the arrival of the Hungarians. Similar medieval historical reconstructions, based on visible archaeological monuments, were fairly common in contemporary Europe – a number of similar French and Spanish texts can be quoted. These reconstructions of the past are nonetheless part of the history of Hungarian archaeology since they represent the first efforts to incorporate the archaeological evidence into a historical narrative. It would be worthwhile to analyze the work of both chroniclers from an archaeological perspective; one study on what Simon de Kéza wrote about Savaria has already appeared. This exercise would also be interesting since Hungarian historiography sometimes still grapples with the problem of how to use the available archaeological evidence, much in the same way as Simon de Kéza in the 13th century.

The second important period in the history of Hungarian archaeology was the 15th–16th century, the age of Hungarian humanists and the late humanists. Matthias Hunyadi’s reign (1458–1490) saw not only the foundation of the *Bibliotheca Corviniana* (that can, in a sense, be regarded as part of the archaeology of the period), but also the cataloguing of Roman relics in Hungary, especially of the inscribed monuments of the Roman period. As a matter of fact, the collection of Roman antiquities began under King Sigismund (1387–1437) and it seems likely that the interest of Italian humanists and Hungarian in antiquities, emerging in the 13th century, remained unbroken. The interest of Italian humanists and Hungarian humanists educated in Italy in Roman monuments was a new element, similarly to the appeal of the Roman and, also, the *romanus valachus* world of Transylvania owing to János Hunyadi and Matthias’ *romanus* origins. Petrus Ransanus (1420–1492) discovered Roman grave monuments in Szentendre, while Antonio Bonfini (†1502) mentioned Roman antiquities in his *Rerum ungaricarum decades*, a chronicle recounting the history of Hungary. These antiquities included inscriptions and coins, and Bonfini even went as far as to invent various inscriptions (similarly to the French Dominican monk and others, up to our days). In Matthias’ age the relics of the past were not only collected, they were also catalogued. We know of at least four collections of inscriptions from this period. János Megyercsei’s (Mezericius) Dacian collection arrived in Buda on July 1, 1489; the inscriptions were carefully copied by Bartholomaeus Fontius. The excavation of Tata Castle revealed that the appreciation of antiquities in Matthias’ time was not restricted to Roman relics: the find context of pottery fragments of the Encrusted Pottery culture of the Bronze Age found in the wing built under Matthias suggested that they were part of a collection of antiquities.

A century later we witness the appearance of the first genuine scholarly work on archaeological finds, an epigraphic study entitled *Analecta lapidum vetustorum et nonnulla- rum in Dacia antiquitatum*, written by Stephanus Zamosius (István Szamosközy, ?1565–1612) on antique Dacian inscribed stones and other antiquities that was published in Padova in 1593. He continued the collection of antiquities after his return from Italy; unfortunately, his overview of the inscriptions in the Apulum (Gyulafehérvar) area from 1598 remained a manuscript. The book published in Padova is remarkable not only for its collection of stone relics from antiquity, but also for the historical data contained in it. It is regrettable that only a fragment of Szamosközy’s oeuvre survived, and that the progress of “early Hungarian archaeology”, begun in Matthias’s time and continued in the 16th century, was interrupted for a long time. There is little to add to these early works from the period up to the 18th century, and even the works in this field that can be cited from the 18th century are very sporadic.

One of the most remarkable years of the period until the 19th century was 1726, when a late medieval–post-medieval collection was founded in the Bethlen College in Nagyenyed and when Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli, an Italian count, published his *Danubius Pannonico-Mysicus*. Working as a military engineer in Hungary in the late 17th century, Marsigli prepared a detailed map of the Danube region. The first description of the remains of the Roman *limes* is to be found in his book (similarly to a number of other relics and monuments that disappeared by the 20th century). This map can hardly be neglected in the research of the Roman castra of Brigetio, Aquincum and Intercisa, or in the study of the ramparts in the Bácska. Sámuil Mikoviny’s (1710–1750) observations and descriptions are equally valuable. The other outstanding engineer of this period provided an accurate description of the aqueduct of Brigetio.

The early achievements of modern Hungarian historiography include a number of works that have some relevance for archaeology too. József Torkos, a Lutheran priest active in Győr, described a Roman stone sarcophagus in 1748. Together with the works of the 16th century humanists, this study can be ranked among the pioneering studies on Roman epigraphy (Torkos was the first to compare the Hungarian language to the Finno-Ugrian tongues, including the Vogul language). The first ‘excavations’ also took place at this time. In 1777 the Jesuit university of Nagyszombat was transferred to Buda and the same year saw the creation of a separate department for the study of numismatics and antiquities
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(Antiquaria et Numismatica), headed by Professor István Schönvisner. Schönvisner unearthed the military bath in Flórián square in 1778. He summed up his findings in a book entitled De Ruderibus Laconici Caldarique Romani. Liber unicus (Budae 1778). István Szilágyi (Salagius), canon of Pécs, provided an overview of the historical monuments of Pannonia at the same time.

The earlier 19th century can be characterized by an interest in “mixed antiquities”. University training was not continuous (the heads of the department usually also held the post of the director of the University Library). Studies and articles with an archaeological relevance appeared in the journal Tudományos Gyűjtemény, in a paper called Sas and in Sokféle, the latter edited by István Sándor. The year 1802, when Count Ferenc Széchényi founded the Hungarian National Museum (the present building was only finished in 1846), marked a definite turning point. An independent Numismatic and Antiquities Collection was created in 1814; the catalogue assembled by Ferdinánd Miller in 1825 contained a rather mixed material (Cimeliotheca Musei Nationalis Hungarici…). Although the publication of the first Hungarian grave from the Conquest Period in 1834 is usually regarded as a major landmark in the history of Hungarian archaeology, the genuine beginning of archaeological fieldwork in the 19th century can be dated from 1846, when the Hungarian National Museum offered a post to János Luczenbacher, who regularly excavated archaeological sites and published his finds (he changed his name to Érdy after one of his excavation sites). He wrote a review of the three age division of prehistory introduced in 1836 by the Danish Christian Jürgensen Thompsen in the 1847 issue of Akadémiai Értesítő (“Stone, Copper and Iron Age graves and antiquities”) and he also submitted an account of his fieldwork in the same volume (“Results of the excavation of the ‘Cumanian’ mounds above the Tárnok valley”). His interest in this site was based on a passage in Simon de Kéza’s 13th century chronicle – in other words, the heritage of Attila’s Huns were still believed to lie under the Early Iron Age tumuli of Százhalombatta, just as in Kéza’s time. János Érdy, however, can hardly be reproached since his excavations and publications laid the foundations of prehistoric archaeology in Hungary.

There is a general consensus that Flóris Rómer (1815–1889) can be considered the father of Hungarian archaeology (Fig. 2). The son of Ferenc Rommer, a cobbler in Pozsony (Bratislava, Slovakia), he became a Benedictine monk and was appointed professor of the natural sciences at the

Fig. 2. Flóris Rómer

Fig. 3. Arnold Ipolyi
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Academy of Pozsony. In 1849, he was sentenced to eight years of imprisonment for participating in the 1848–49 Revolution and War of Independence (he was a sapper lieutenant). After regaining his freedom in 1854, he continued lecturing from 1857 and from 1858 he worked in Győr. His articles on Roman and other antiquities from this region appeared in Győri Közlöny from 1859. His first major work, A Bakony. Természetrájzi és régészeti vázlat [The Bakony. A geographical and archaeological sketch] appeared in 1860. This book brought him acclaim and he was elected corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Even though his inaugural lecture was devoted to the geographical and natural conditions of medieval Hungary, he had already turned to history and archaeology, as shown by his papers published in Győri Történeti és Régészeti Füzetek from 1860 and the archaeological letters that appeared in Vasárnap Újság.

The change in Rómer’s interest was influenced by the foundation of the Archaeological Committee of the Academy in 1858 and the launching of the periodical Archaeológiai Közlemények in 1859 (the last issue appeared in 1899) that from volume II was edited by Arnold Ipolyi (Fig. 3), Rómer’s former school mate and a close friend of his. His interest in the natural sciences did not wane: he participated in the annual meetings of the Hungarian Physicists and Nature Explorers. From this time on, his activity was archaeological in the sense determined by the regulation of the Archaeological Committee: “The committee should pursue two main activities: (a) the study of antiquities proper, encompassing the heritage of the Hungarian nation until the Szatmár Peace Treaty, (b) the study of antiquities in general, insofar as it has any relevance for the past of our country and enriches our knowledge of her archaeology”. In 1862 Rómer moved to Pest and took up a post as teacher and director of the main gymnasium of Pest. From 1863 he lectured on ‘historical archaeology’ at the university of Pest. The volume Műrégészeti kalauz [Archaeological Guide], published by the Archaeological Committee in 1866, contained a chapter on prehistory written by Rómer, while Imre Henszlman authored the chapter on medieval architecture. Rómer’s chapter on prehistory was not restricted to prehistoric archaeology since he also included relics of the Roman Age and the Migration period in his discussion. The work is rounded off by a catalogue of Hungarian relics; what is apparent at first glance is that in contrast to Henszlman, Rómer used Hungarian data more extensively than his colleague, who placed his trust in foreign literature. It is not mere chance that Rómer’s Őskori műrégészet [Prehistoric archaeology] became a handbook in the later 19th century, used by both amateur antiquarians and members of the freshly founded archaeological committees.

The year 1868 marked a milestone in Rómer’s activity. He was appointed professor at the university and the journal Archaeológiai Értesítő was launched on his initiative. He edited the journal (the first few issues contained articles written almost exclusively by him). Archaeológiai Értesítő became, in Rómer’s words, the “driving force” of Hungarian archaeology. A number of local museums and archaeological committees were founded, and the journal that had struggled with a lack of articles in its first few issues was
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(1849–1913) who succeeded Károly Torma at the university chair. From the 1880s Hampel published detailed overviews of the finds of practically all archaeological periods, from prehistory to the Migration period. The country was caught up in the fervent preparations for celebrating the millenary of the Hungarian conquest, and it was hardly accidental that the number of Conquest and Migration period grave finds increased significantly, due to the enthusiasm of the archaeological societies and the museums in the country. Planned excavations were conducted mainly in western Hungary (Lajos Bella: Sopron–Burgrast; Ágost Sóter: Gáta, etc.) and in Aquincum, where Bálint Kuzsinszky (1864–1938) investigated the Roman town between 1887 and the first third of the 20th century (Fig. 6). Kuzsinszky contributed the chapter on the Roman history of Dacia and Pannonia in volume I of A Magyar Nemzet Története [History of the Hungarian Nation] edited by Sándor Szilágyi in 1895. (Interestingly enough, a brief summary of the preceding period based on the works of Herodotus, Strabo and Ptolemy was written by Róbert Fröhlich. Géza Nagy wrote the chapter on the Migration period, while József Hampel’s review of the archaeological heritage of the ancient Hungarians appeared in the volume A Magyar Honfoglalás Kútfü [Sources of the Hungarian Conquest], published in 1900.)

The close of the century was characterized by the unsystematic collection of finds and the publication of these finds. This picture is not basically modified by the cited exceptions or Lajos Márton’s (1867–1934) excavations at Tószeg, begun in 1906, that can be regarded as a systematic, planned project from 1910, and Antal Hekler’s excavations at Dunapentele during the same period.

These initiatives (including the investigations at Aquincum) were swept away by World War I (although the university of Kolozsvár continued its excavations in Galicia even during the war years). The Hungarian universities, museums and archaeological societies were closed down in the territories that were annexed to the successor states in accordance with the Trianon Peace Treaty and even the earlier rather meagre funding was cut off. Archaeological research was now practically directed from Budapest. This did have its advantages since from the end of the 1920s and in the 1930s the meagre financial budget had to be carefully apportioned. In spite of these restricted financial possibilities, the Hungarian National Museum was able to receive grants for smaller planned excavations from the Vigyázó Foundation. This was the period when, for the first time since János Érdy’s excavations, the number of completely excavated prehistoric cemeteries rose significantly (Bodrogkeresztúr, Pusztasvárház, etc.). Ferenc Tompa (1893–1945) conducted excavations at Tószeg from the 1920s, first using foreign and, later, Hungarian funds. From 1931 he investigated the stratified Bronze Age settlement at Füzesabony, as well as a number of other settlements. Beginning his career at Szeged University in 1925, János Banner regularly conducted excavations in the Hódmezővásárhely area from 1929 to the mid-1940s that were funded by the town.

Fig. 5. Jenő Zichy and Béla Pósta

Flóris Rómer, who from 1869 was also a department head in the Hungarian National Museum, played a major role in the organization of the Eighth Session of the International Congress of Prehistory and Protohistory in Hungary in 1876 (Fig. 4). The programme of the congress included a round of important archaeological sites and a visit to the recently unearthed Bronze Age settlement at Tószeg. The papers read at the congress were published in 1878. The volume can be regarded as a summary of the achievements and findings of Hungarian archaeology until then and it also represented the zenith of Rómer’s archaeological activity since after his subsequent appointment as ‘literary canon’ in Nagyvárás, he became less active in the capital (although he continued his archaeological activity with the excavation of the Várád church in 1882–83).

The close of the 19th century was characterized by a proliferation of archaeological societies and museums all over the country (although it must be noted that the Transylvanian Museum and Museum Association was founded already in 1859 in Kolozsvár, and from 1899 courses on archaeology were also held at the university by Béla Posta; Fig. 5). The archaeological activity of Budapest was centered more on cataloging the finds collected earlier than on actual fieldwork. This was especially true of József Hampel (1849–1913) who succeeded Károly Torma at the university chair. From the 1880s Hampel published detailed overviews of the finds of practically all archaeological periods, from prehistory to the Migration period. The country was caught up in the fervent preparations for celebrating the millenary of the Hungarian conquest, and it was hardly accidental that the number of Conquest and Migration period grave finds increased significantly, due to the enthusiasm of the archaeological societies and the museums in the country. Planned excavations were conducted mainly in western Hungary (Lajos Bella: Sopron–Burgrast; Ágost Sóter: Gáta, etc.) and in Aquincum, where Bálint Kuzsinszky (1864–1938) investigated the Roman town between 1887 and the first third of the 20th century (Fig. 6). Kuzsinszky contributed the chapter on the Roman history of Dacia and Pannonia in volume I of A Magyar Nemzet Története [History of the Hungarian Nation] edited by Sándor Szilágyi in 1895. (Interestingly enough, a brief summary of the preceding period based on the works of Herodotus, Strabo and Ptolemy was written by Róbert Fröhlich. Géza Nagy wrote the chapter on the Migration period, while József Hampel’s review of the archaeological heritage of the ancient Hungarians appeared in the volume A Magyar Honfoglalás Kútfü [Sources of the Hungarian Conquest], published in 1900.)

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Important burial grounds of the Migration period were also unearthed in the interwar period. These excavations were relatively well documented compared to the cemetery excavations of the 19th century that were either poorly documented or not documented at all. At the same time, the study of Roman period settlements declined (in part due to the fact that these had mostly been conducted in Transylvania, where the former Roman province of Dacia lay) and practically became restricted to the excavations at Aquincum directed by the Municipal History Museum; István Paulovics’ excavations at Brigetio were also begun at this time. The ranks of well-trained professionals were swelled by luminaries such as Ferenc Tompa (who was professor of prehistory at the university from 1938), Nándor Fettich (1900–1971), Keeper of the Migration Period collection of the National Museum and András Alföldi (1895–1981), who lectured on the Roman Age and the Migration period in the department that succeeded the old university institute.

By the 1930s and 1940s, there emerged a generally accepted outline of the archaeology of Hungary, based on the findings of various excavations, with clearly defined prehistoric periods, a fairly good idea of the Migration period and a rather detailed history of Pannonia. András Alföldi, Nándor Fettich and Ferenc Tompa all played a prominent role in the advances made during this period. Alföldi edited the *Dissertationes Archaeologicae*, whose volumes covered the most important finds of Roman Pannonia, while Fettich was the editor of *Archaeologia Hungarica*, a series of monographs on the Neolithic, the Copper Age, the Scythian Age, the Avar period and the Conquest period, many of which contain observations that have not lost their relevance. Ferenc Tompa wrote an overview of Hungarian prehistory in a monograph published in 1934–35 and in volume I of *Budapest Története* [History of Budapest] in 1942. The same volume included chapters by András Alföldi and Lajos Nagy on the Roman period, containing many observations that are still valid today, while Gyula László (1910–1998) contributed the chapters on the Migration and the Conquest periods. Archaeological research was at the time up to the general standards of the period – unfortunately, in many cases this standard was not maintained after World War 2. It must also be noted that following the heated debates at
the turn of the 19th–20th centuries, a fairly accurate picture of the Hungarian “palaeoliths”, i.e. the stone artefacts of the Old Stone Age, emerged by the interwar period, mainly as a result of the cave excavations conducted by Ottokár Kadić, Tivadar Kormos and others. The advances in this field were so rapid that by 1935 Jenő Hillebrand was able to write a summary of the Hungarian Palaeolithic, based predominantly on cave sites (and, obviously, on Kadić’s findings). Only the Ságvár and Szeged–Othalom campsites were known at that time. Another characteristic feature of the interwar period was the lack of settlement research, the few notable exceptions being a handful of prehistoric sites, Kálmán Szabó’s excavation of a late medieval site near Kecskemét and József Csalogovics’ investigations at Ete. As a result, the archaeology of various prehistoric periods, the Migration period and the early Middle Ages was based on the information gained from cemeteries that in many cases gave a rather distorted picture of the periods in question. As a matter of fact, Hungarian archaeological research has in many respects still failed to remedy this shortcoming. The possibility to improve this situation was given. Disregarding the transitional period in the 1940s, archaeological research after World War 2 continued under rather unusual circumstances. Hungary became a Soviet satellite and the country’s political system adopted the Soviet model that brought significant structural changes to the scholarly disciplines, as well as to the educational system. A central institution called the National Centre of Museums and Monuments was created and vested with absolute authority in matters concerning excavations, budgets and professionals. Following the university reform, a museology course was introduced in 1948–49. As part of the planned economy, a “Five-year plan of Hungarian archaeology” was prepared for 1950–1954. This plan expressed the ideas of distinguished scholars active at the time (some of whom, such Andráss Alföldi, Sándor Gallus and István Foltiny, later fled the country), while the main goals outlined in it conformed wholly to the given political situation. Disregarding a few minor elements, the plan was rather poor. In some cases research projects were overplanned to the extent that made the completion of the project practically impossible (suffice it here to mention Zalavár). Even so, the plan did have some positive results, for example in Roman studies, especially regarding the investigation of the limes, as well as in the study of the settlements of the Árpádian Age, a research project launched on the initiative of Gyula László and István Méri (1911–1976). Compared to the pre-war period, extensive excavations were also begun in consequence of the large-scale industrial projects so typical of Soviet type economies (Intercisa, Tiszalók and, indirectly, the excavations at the Ózd–Stadion site). Hungarian archaeological research, however, could not fully exploit these opportunities. Significant advances in this period were reflected in the improvement of the general standard of university training after 1956 (and the re-establishment of an independent archaeological department), the creation of the Archaeological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1958 (even if it was initially envisioned as a research team), and the relative independence given to county museums from 1963. The achievements of Hungarian archaeological research in the later 20th century surpassed by far those of former periods, even though a comparison with the research standards of the 1930s and 1940s would not always yield a positive result. The Hungarian Archaeological Topography project can similarly be regarded as a major advance. Begun in the late 1950s, the areas surveyed as part of this project – launched largely on the initiative of János Banner, who became professor at the Budapest university after World War 2 – only make up a fragment of Hungary’s territory (Veszprém, Békés, Komárom–Esztergom and Zala counties, although even in these counties some districts have not been covered). Apart from the efforts of a few indefatigable individuals, excavations over a larger area could only be conducted before the start of large-scale construction projects. However, the archaeological information that can be gained from these excavations is only a fragment of that provided by meticulously planned excavation projects since the topsoil and the upper layers containing the majority of the archaeological information are usually removed mechanically (and destroyed in the process), meaning that although more can be learnt about the overall layout of a particular settlement owing to the larger areas that are investigated, very little survives of the actual settlement. This is one of the reasons why so little is known about the various settlements of the Avar period. Although we now have a better knowledge of the lower levels of settlements owing to excavations of this type, a more accurate picture can only be gained in cases when the archaeologist’s efforts enabled this (the Doboz and Kölked sites can be cited as good examples). In spite of István Méri’s initiatives, settlement archaeology has remained a field of research in which there is still much to be done for practically all archaeological periods. Even so, it is now possible to present a fairly accurate picture of every major period from the Palaeolithic to the Middle Ages, to which archaeological research in the later 20th century contributed many new elements. This statement remains valid in spite of the fact that this picture often contains may hues that exceed the conclusions that can be drawn from the archaeological record. To quote but one example: the number of graves from the Árpádian Age unearthed to date represents about 0.26 per cent of the people buried during that period; as regards the earlier periods (with the exception of the Conquest period), this percentage is even lower. The fact that no more than about 15 per cent of a culture can be recovered using archaeological methods is a serious caveat and most certainly calls for a reassessment of to what purpose and to what extent the archaeological record can be used. Hungarian archaeology is still too historicizing, setting itself tasks that can hardly be solved using archaeological methods, and in this sense it is a continuation of the ‘national’ archaeology of the 19th century. The introduction to Régészeti Készönyv [Handbook of Archaeology], published in 1954, begins with a statement that is hardly valid: “Archaeology is a historical discipline.”
Archaeology is suitable for recording various phenomena and for attempting the determination of the chronological position of these phenomena. Any reconstruction calls for the use of non-archaeological methods and disciplines. Accordingly, historical reconstructions can be considered not only misleading, but often downright harmful, especially if these reconstructions concern the history of a nation (and in many cases, certain elements of these reconstructions tend to suggest that they refer to a modern period, rather than the one being examined). This is obviously valid not only for Hungarian archaeology, but also for that of the neighbouring countries.

**UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGY**

Attila Gaál

**THE EMERGENCE OF UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGY IN HUNGARY**

Underwater archaeology, the youngest branch of Hungarian archaeology, has a very short history. This discipline appeared in the later 1980s and no matter how astonishing this may sound, its emergence was largely due to an accidental archaeological find, rather than a conscious professional decision. The find in question was discovered in the Bölcske section of the Danube, at a site that was already known, but had never been precisely located, called “Tempelomos” [Templar] by the locals and Bölcske rock by watermen. Before discussing this find, a brief overview of the potentials of underwater archaeology seems in order, especially since Hungary is a country that does not have seas with good diving conditions. The largest body of still water is Lake Balaton, the rivers are murky, and visibility is usually between 0 and 50 cm, depending on depth, water temperature and various other factors.

Since Hungary has lost its former coastal areas and a great part of its rivers owing to the twists and turns in the country’s history, the shipwrecks and archaeological finds discovered beyond the borders of the Hungary will not be discussed here. The widely acclaimed attempts of Hungarian divers to find the Saint Stephen warship between 1994 and 1997 is also beyond the scope of this section, even though the Diver Archaeologist Department of the Society of Hungarian Archaeology and Art History, founded in Szekszárd in 1992, was one of the organizers of this famous expedition. It must also be borne in mind that the date of the catastrophe of this 151 m long and 28 m broad proud warship falls outside the upper time limit of archaeology, set at the beginning of the 18th century. It must also be mentioned in passing that a number of Hungarian diver archaeologists participated in underwater research projects and shipwreck explorations in Greece, Spain and the Republic of South Africa, indicating that their activity is well received.

**THE CONDITIONS OF UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGY IN HUNGARY**

The thousands of finds recovered from Hungarian waters since the start of Hungarian underwater archaeology can compensate for much lost information. What must be borne in mind, however, is that the majority of these finds was not recovered by archaeologists, but by various machines, dredgers and excavators, or they came to light accidentally. When finds were brought to light by archaeologists, their work circumstances differed from the ones to which foreign colleagues are accustomed to in seas, in the clear waters of mountain lakes and in oceans. Unfortunately, the conditions specific to Hungarian waters forced us to accept that it is near impossible to make visual observations, one of the most important tools of archaeology. Hungarian rivers, especially the Danube, have fast currents that dislocate the finds: their survey and drawing calls for special methods. Most Hungarian lakes have rather muddy waters, and Lake Balaton is no exception in spite of its relatively clear waters; the oxbows and smaller lakes often have 50–80 cm thick floating or soft mud in them. The depth of the mud was 120 cm over almost the entire width in the Tolna dead channel of the Danube, where we searched for the remains of a wall that the locals had seen half a century ago. Such conditions make excavation difficult and raise many problems that need to be solved by Hungarian underwater archaeology that is currently under reorganization owing to the decline following the initial upswing.

**UNDERWATER FINDS, UNDERWATER SITES**

In spite of the many finds that have been recovered from rivers, lakes, wells, marshes and mud, there is no general consensus about what should be regarded as an underwater archaeological find and which sites belong to the sphere of underwater archaeology.

The wells of the Turkish palisade fort at Szekszárd–Palánk and the Roman wells uncovered during the excavations preceding the construction of the M1 motorway near Győr, for example, became refilled with water during the excavation, and the final phase of their excavation had to be performed under water. However, the finds recovered from these wells are not underwater finds in the strict sense and can be assigned to the assemblages recovered by traditional field methods since the greater part of the work and documentation was done using traditional field methods. The number of finds uncovered during dredging operations and gravel mining runs into the thousands. Entire museums could be filled with the fossil bones, Bronze Age, Celtic, Roman Age, medieval and Ottoman period finds that came to light from the Danube between Dunajuváros and Paks. Unfortunately, most of these finds were lost to archaeological scholarship in spite of the fact that they are legally protected; in more fortunate cases, these finds are acquired by
private collectors who often have more funds at their disposal than the average museum. These collectors keep a constant patrol around the dredgers, and dispensing with the paperwork, they pay cash on spot. Most of these finds, including an intact Bronze Age helmet of the Lausitz type found at Paks in 1999 – a unique and outstanding find – are underwater finds, even if their majority fell into the water accidentally, either during a battle, while fording the river, or when their owner drowned: we will never actually know what happened. In other words, their findspot does not indicate the presence of an underwater site worthy of further investigations. In contrast, various architectural features, such as bridge remains, various buildings and forts, as well as ship cargos consisting, for example, of Roman Age iron tools, early 5th century pottery or Turkish copper vessels that are known from archival records, the archaeological literature, the press or from the recollections of the locals, should be taken seriously and given every legal protection. These locations are archaeological sites in the strict sense of the word and their identification is an urgent task. Gábor Szabó and János Attila Tóth, members of the Student Diver Group of the Diver Archaeological Department of the Archaeological Society, have done much in this respect. They systematically collected and documented the stray finds and sites that were already known or could be identified during diving sessions, compiling a register of these sites. They also listed the investigations that had been conducted using diver archaeological methods in Hungary until 1994, when they completed their manuscript. Together with the few underwater excavations, this database – that already needs to be updated – is one of the most promising achievements of Hungarian underwater archaeology.

UNDERWATER EXCAVATIONS IN HUNGARY

The first regular underwater archaeological excavation in Hungary was conducted by the Wosinsky Mór Museum between 1986 and 1996 at Bölcse with the help of scuba-divers. The importance of the early 4th century A.D. Roman fort guarding the port on right tributary of the Danube lies in the fact that its walls and ruins included secondarily used altar stones and grave altars transported here from two Roman towns, Campona/Nagytétény and, mainly, Aquincum/Óbuda. The number of inscribed stone monuments (now exhibited in the Soproni Sándor Lapidarium at Bölcse and in front of the Szekszárd museum; Fig. 7) is over forty, while the smaller finds, mostly coins, recovered from the clearing of the ruins totals some one hundred. Over fifty stamped bricks were also found. Nearly all the stones from Óbuda were altars erected by the local duumvir in honour of Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Teutanus in the first half of the 3rd century A.D. These finds constitute an important corpus for the study of the civitas Eraviscorum.

The archaeological work was conducted from a pontoon serving as a diving base with the help of the Dunaferr Diving Club and the village of Bölcse amid great difficulties caused by the 7–8 km/h flow velocity and often zero metre visibility. It often happened that while a diver was lowered on a security rope to replace his colleague who had worked an hour to free an altar stone, the sand at the bottom of the river bed reburied the find (Fig. 8). Apart from diving operations in November and December, neither photos, nor video films could be made, and even the shots made in the freezing water, relatively free of algae, could only be evaluated by specialists. Archaeological field methods can hardly

Fig. 7. Roman altar stones brought to light between 1986 and 1996, exhibited in the square before the Wosinsky Mór Museum in Szekszárd
be used under such circumstances: the divers could only rely on their fingers, and touching replaced eyesight. Neither could the traditional techniques of surveying and drawing be employed. The experiences gained at this site definitely indicated that underwater archaeological investigations in Hungary can only be begun after a magnetometer survey of the area, a technique that is generally employed, and seismologic investigations along longitudinal and crosswise sections since these reveal the location and direction of the walls, the position of larger objects and their distances relative to each other and the river bank. The experiences gained at Bölcske were very helpful in the excavation of the sarcophagus remains and inscribed tombstones with relief carvings found at a depth of 7 m during gravel dredging and other river operations in a small dead channel of the Danube at Vetus Salina/Adony in the summer of 2000 (Fig. 9).

Other investigations conducted in various parts of the country between the two dates marked by the start of the Bölcske and Adony investigations can also be quoted. These were mainly directed at locating mostly Roman Age and, sometimes, medieval underwater sites. These included the Roman bridge at the Hajógyár Island in Óbuda and the search for a salt transporting boat with a cargo of Roman stone relics that had sunk in the Tisza at Szeged. Under the supervision of archaeologists, scuba-divers searched for Roman remains in the gravel pit of Barátföldpuszta at Lébényszentmiklós, an already known site, in the gravel pit of Máriaklánok and in the Toronyvár-dűlő at Kunszigtet, while the remains of the village of Losta from the Árpádian Age were sought on the northern side of Lake Balaton. Following the initial enthusiasm sparked by the Bölcske investigations, the help of the secretary-general of the Hungarian Diving Society was enlisted for training students of archaeology in diving and the organization of archaeological courses for divers. At the same time, a data sheet was prepared for registering underwater finds. This initial enthusiasm gradually faded, partly owing to financial reasons and partly to the indifference of both parties.

This is all the more regrettable since countless dangers threaten the underwater monuments, ranging from the decay of these sites to illegal diver activities and the dredging of river basins. The most endangered areas at present are the river banks close to the main Danube channel and the territories between dead channels, where new gravel and sand pits are constantly opened. The dredging entrepreneurs have been gradually ousted from the Danube and they moved their operations to these bank regions on the pretext of rehabilitating formerly active branches. As a result, it seems more than likely that their activity will damage a number of archaeological sites that presently lie concealed under a several metres thick gravel layer.

**OPINIONS AND COUNTER-OPINIONS**

Finally, a few words about certain misunderstandings that are often also voiced by professionals concerning underwater archaeological finds. One frequent misconception is that underwater archaeological finds do not necessarily have to be brought to light since they are quite safe and protected under the water, whereas bringing them to the
surface may mean certain decay. The conservation properties of water, marshland and peat are in many cases indeed wonderful, but not for every type of material. Leather, wood, bone and some textiles survive under constantly moist conditions, whereas certain metals, especially burnt iron objects, decay within a few centuries. The iron core of the latter is often replaced by a cavity lined by oxide and filled up with a putrid fluid. Beside the damage caused by the iron bottom platings of boats, a network of fine fissures can be made out on the limestone altar stones from Bölcske, caused by the constant fluctuation of the water temperature; other damages include the ones caused by human intervention, such as the use of explosives at the time of icy floods. The cylindrical handle without any traces of wear and the brand new, clean blade of a Roman trowel dropped into the boiling mortar during the construction of the fort’s wall suggest that it was probably lost on the very first day of its use, while many of the bronze coins are so strongly oxidized that their identification was often problematic. Although the examples are often contradictory, it is our conviction that water is not a natural environment for archaeological objects and they must be unearthed as soon as possible and conserved more carefully than finds recovered from the ground.

The call to find the royal ships that had sunk in 1526 was voiced repeatedly, especially after finds provoking great attention came to light, such as the gold plate found at Visegrád. This idea is still periodically raised. However, it must be borne in mind that the current of the Danube is so fast even along the lower reaches of the river that it can easily transport the metal body of a sunken ship filled with water tens of kilometres away within a few hours. Even in knowledge of the fact that the river was not restricted by dams in the 17th century and, consequently, its flow was slower, this was certainly not the case in the Visegrád section of the river, where it flows between hills. Many square kilometres would have to be surveyed to find the ships, an almost impossible task given the present technical possibilities. Only the strict control of stray (and dredged up) finds, combined with careful underwater work based on these bits and pieces of information, can lead to the possible discovery of these ships.

THE FUTURE OF UNDERWATER RESEARCH

In spite of the difficulties described above, the declared intention of the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage that Hungary become a signatory of the UNESCO convention on the protection of the underwater cultural heritage that would ensure the necessary protection for archaeological finds and features not only in the seas, but also in rivers, lakes and marshlands – including the ones in Hungary – is definitely a promising sign. The ministry set up a working group in late 1999 to elaborate the Hungarian point of view. The group’s task was to study the draft convention prepared by UNESCO and to make suggestions and modifications corresponding to the Hungarian conditions and needs. A similarly important task is the organization of the training of archaeologists and conservators for underwater work, as well as training divers for archaeological work. No less important is the ensuring of adequate funding for the excavation of underwater archaeological sites and, also, that underwater archaeology be moved from the periphery to a more focal place in Hungarian archaeology.

AERIAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN HUNGARY

Zsolt Visy

The invention and use of zeppelins and airplanes was one of the major advances of the late 19th century, fulfilling a many thousand years old dream of mankind. Until then, observations could be made only from mountain peaks, hills and higher elevations. The invention of flying machines meant that observations could now be made from balloons, the antecedents of real aerial photos, appeared at the end of the 19th century. As it often happens in the case of major inventions, the pioneering work in this field was done by the military. The advantages of aerial reconnaissance and the potentials of recording observations on a photo were quickly realized during World War 1. Observation from a high altitude and the accompanying photographs opened new perspectives for scientific research – the specialists of this new method soon determined the

Fig. 10. Late Neolithic or Early Copper Age enclosure and rampart at Jánosbida–Portelek
optimal conditions for its application and worked out when, from what altitude and at what time of day the best results could be obtained. They soon realized that many features that remained undetected on the ground became visible from the air and, also, that phenomena that appeared as random features on the ground formed a coherent pattern if viewed from above, revealing a number of points that could never have been detected on the ground. A number of partially or totally buried remains and other relics of bygone ages could be identified (Fig. 10). Aerial photography was one of the positive accomplishments of World War I; many pilots fighting in the war were the first to observe and register archaeological relics. After returning to civil life, they began to organize the systematic aerial reconnaissance, documentation and evaluation of archaeological features.

The pioneers of aerial archaeology elaborated the methods of this discipline in the 1920s and 1930s. In addition to work in Europe, they were also interested in the exploration of buried ruins in the desert areas of Africa and the Near East. The doyens of the field, Theodor Wiegand, Antoine Poidebard and, later, Osbert Guy Stanhope Crawford, were joined by Aurél Stein who began the aerial exploration of the Roman *limes* and other archaeological monuments in Iraq in 1938, at the age of 76. Aerial archaeology in Hungary began more or less simultaneously with international experiments in this field. In 1938, Lóránd Radnai published a paper in which he described the archaeological uses of aerial photography and the basic requirements of successful observation. The first aerial photos were published in *Archaeologiai Értesítő* two years later: in his discussion of these photos Radnai convincingly proved his point and demonstrated that aerial photography can be successfully applied under Hungarian conditions too.

Archaeologists soon became acquainted with this important new research technique. A few years later Aladár Radnóti published high quality photos that could be evaluated archaeologically in his study on the Dacian *limes* along the ridge of the Meszes mountains. Wartime conditions greatly contributed to advances in archaeological aerial photography, but they also brought a number of restrictions. While planned reconnaissance flights could rarely be made, there were no objections to the archaeological analysis of the high number of excellent aerial photos made by the army. Sándor Neógrády spent long years studying these photos. He accumulated an impressive collection of aerial photos, publishing a part of his collection at the last possible moment in 1950. We can only hypothesize what else there was in his collection that never became generally accessible owing to the changes in the political climate. The all-pervasive atmosphere of suspicion characterizing the Communist system did not allow the complex mapping of Hungary’s territory and aerial reconnaissance was relegated to the category of military secrets.

The political thaw in the 1970s at last made possible the application of aerial photography for purposes other than military reconnaissance, obviously with the strict observance of regulations. Aerial photography for archaeological research could at last begin, although the photographs made during this period often had little scientific value since they were not always made at the optimal time and under optimal conditions, but when the flight was permitted. It now became possible to systematically study the photos made for topographic or economic purposes on which archaeological features could be clearly made out. Most important among these was a series from the early 1940s that showed the entire Hungarian section of the Danube and other territories. A number of features that now lie concealed under buildings and factories built since, or have been destroyed by intensive cultivation, are still visible on these photos. The photos made in the 1950s and later also contained much useful photographic material.
information and their study can still yield new data since the careful inspection of these photos can lead to new discoveries. The restrictions on aerial photography were gradually lifted, first by easing the strict regulations and, after the political changes, by declassifying certain maps and photograph types. The earlier strict regulation only allowed the aerial photography of already known archaeological sites, meaning that archaeological reconnaissance flights with the purpose of discovering and documenting new archaeological features and remains were not permitted. The new regulation allows flights over larger areas and the unrestricted photography of the assumed and identified features. The current Hungarian system more or less conforms to the regulations in most European countries (Fig. 11).

The principle of detecting archaeological features from the air is essentially identical with the one enabling identification during fieldwork: once the soil has been disturbed, the traces of these interventions are preserved in the soil, often for long millennia in exceptionally fortunate cases. These interventions are reflected in the colour, the compactness, the composition and moisture retention of the soil. Traces of human intervention can be distinguished on aerial photos of a particular area much in the same way as the different layers in the section of a trench in an excavation. Aerial photos, however, often contain a wealth of smaller details that are not apparent in the average excavation section. Since the soil disturbed by human activity differs from its immediate environment, often the vegetation itself or the snow cover may indicate that something lies hidden in the ground. Plants usually grow higher in the more humic soil filling pits and ditches, while they remain underdeveloped over the stone and mortar in the walls of buildings (Fig. 12). Micro-organisms thrive in the more humic soils, often generating sufficient heat to melt a thin layer of freshly fallen snow over a former pit or the line of an ancient ditch. Of the various

Fig. 13. Roman period tumuli at Écs

Fig. 14. Medieval earthen hillfort and ramparts at Galgabéčés-Szentandrás-part
plants, cereals are the most suitable for indicating archaeological features buried under the soil. Divergences from the surrounding area are reflected in the colour, the phase of development and ripening and, very often, in height. These small differences are often caused by drought since the vegetation relies on the moisture and nourishment it can attain through its roots, and differences can be considerable in stony or strongly humic rich soils. Similarly to other archaeological features that have survived as surface reliefs, the slight differences in height can best be observed in the form of shadow marks cast by the rising or setting sun.

Aerial photography plays an increasingly important role in archaeology. Beside the identification of archaeological sites, these photos are invaluable for determining the extent, the structure and the basic outlay of a site. The groundplan and layout of the visible features are sometimes sufficient in themselves for determining the date of these archaeological remains (Fig. 13). In contrast to the obliquely photographed features with a strong foreshortening whose mapping is a rather complicated procedure, the mapping and identification of features photographed vertically is not particularly difficult. Computer technology has brought a breakthrough in this respect too, since a few points are generally sufficient for running a GIS modelling programme and the digitized image can be directly projected onto a map (Fig. 14).

Aerial archaeology has progressed at an unbelievable pace in Hungary during the last decade of the 20th century. Thousands of aerial photos have been made and several major projects were launched and carried out using GIS modelling. Major advances have been made in mastering the necessary techniques and applications of aerial archaeology, as well as in the creation of aerial photo databases. Aerial archaeology contributed greatly towards accelerating the pace of archaeological topography and creating a national registry of archaeological sites. Similarly, the creation of a uniform archaeological database through the co-operation of several institutions is no longer a dream that can only be achieved in the distant future (Fig. 15).

**Fig. 15. Roman fort. Sársszentágota**

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**URBAN ARCHAEOLOGY: A SPECIAL FIELD OF HERITAGE PROTECTION**

*Paula Zsidi*

The conditions of archaeological fieldwork in rural and urban areas differed significantly from the very beginning of archaeological research, although in Hungary urban archaeology in the Western European sense only made its appearance in the mid-1970s. Beside Budapest, urban archaeology is pursued in all Hungarian towns that have a historical centre and when the rescue and the conservation of the relics of the past must be considered in urban development projects (as in Pécs, Sopron, Szombathely and elsewhere).

Urban archaeology is a direct outgrowth of urban planning and construction projects. This can be especially well observed in Budapest, an excellent example being the territory of Óbuda. The excavations of the civilian settlement of Aquincum began when the town wall of this settlement was demolished as part of a construction project. In the lack of a central regulation, local regulations were passed in the 1870s and 1880s to protect the monuments discovered in Óbuda and “to prevent their destruction”. Another regulation was passed in Budapest in 1928 that stipulated not only that the finds should be handed over to the appropriate authorities, but also that the discovered monuments “be examined by the museum” even at the price of suspending the work for a week.

One major change in urban archaeology came in the mid-1970s, when earth-moving operations were mechanized on construction projects. The pace of earth-moving operations accelerated, posing a major threat to the archaeological heritage and a significant rise in the number of excavations (Fig. 16). Archaeologists had to come to terms with the fact that archaeological investigations became part of these construction projects. The same process had already occurred earlier in Western Europe and Hungarian archaeologists could thus familiarize themselves with the modern methods of urban archaeology through their international contacts and at various international workshops devoted to this subject. The protection of the historical centres of Cologne, Bonn, London and other cities served as models for the elaboration of the Hungarian practice in this field. Hungary also signed a series of European conventions and treaties on the protection of historical town centres and the protection of the archaeological heritage. The principles and norms laid down in these conventions, such as the Malta Convention signed in 1992 and ratified by Hungary in 2000, were incorporated into Act CXL of 1997 and, more emphatically, into Act LXIV of 2001.

As regards the protection of the historical town centres, the growing number of private construction projects meant an unusually acute threat from the early 1990s. Fortunately, the preparatory work based on the experiences of earlier decades and the continuously updated archaeological database, the improvement in technical equipment and the
familiarity with experiences gained in other European towns was instrumental to surviving this period without major damages. Act CXL of 1997 provided a secure financial background for the protection of the archaeological heritage and this enabled the continuation of excavation campaigns without a major break. In order to achieve and maintain the required high standards, urban archaeology also calls for the activity of highly qualified professionals with experience in this field and the structural reform of the institutions involved in urban archaeology.

**THE NATURE OF URBAN ARCHAEOLOGY**

There are several features specific to urban archaeology that distinguish this discipline from planned excavations and from the usual fieldwork preceding large-scale greenfield investment projects in areas that are not built up. For example, the start of the excavation campaign and its duration is determined by the pace of the construction work. The excavation itself cannot be meticulously planned and the investigations are rarely conducted on sites that would otherwise have been chosen for addressing specific problems of a given archaeological period. There is need for constant liaison with the appropriate construction authorities and the regional chief architects; at the same time, the taxation and labour legislation that applies in these cases is not always unambiguous. The gravest problem, however, is the conservation, cataloguing and storage of the immense number of finds brought to light during the excavations.

Beside the protection of the archaeological heritage, the needs of archaeological scholarship must also be considered. The schedule of these construction projects, most of which are usually unrelated to each other, is rarely determined by the needs of the discipline. The findings of the excavations associated with construction projects can only be set into their genuine context and become useful historical sources if they are fitted into a database containing the relevant data. Topographic research projects of different historical periods play an important role in urban archaeology since they provide a coherent framework into which the seemingly unrelated bits and pieces of information can be fitted. The Budapest History Museum has so-called regional supervisors co-ordinating the topographic research projects, whose main task is to ensure that the needs of the discipline are taken into consideration. These regional supervisors keep track of the excavations in their area, directing and co-ordinating the work of the archaeologists in the case of simultaneously conducted excavations.

Urban archaeology often resembles a huge jigsaw puzzle. An important new breakthrough is in many cases only possible after fitting together tiny details, obtained from many years of patient work. The seemingly unrelated bits and pieces of information are recorded and mapped, and only later do they form a coherent picture and become a useful historical source. The different parts of a prehistoric settlement or cemetery, or parts of a Roman period or medieval building are often discovered separately, and only after many years or even decades can they be fitted into the overall picture. An excavation usually means the very last, unrepeatable opportunity to recover and document the information of an archaeological site. In the case of relics and monuments that will be destroyed, the objective is their complete excavation as best as possible. Archaeometric methods, such as archaeozoology, archaeobotany, dendrochronology, archaeomagnetic surveys, etc., can be successfully applied in these cases, as shown by the experiences of more recent years.

*Fig. 16. Urban archaeology: excavation on the territory of the military town of Aquincum in Óbuda in the 1980s*
URBAN EXCAVATIONS AND URBAN PLANNING

The continuous contact between institutions responsible for urban planning and the protection of the archaeological heritage is vital. According to the current legislation, the archaeological importance of a given area must be taken into consideration during the initial phase of urban planning projects and the preparation of the overall plans. This also means that ‘unexpected rescue excavations’ and the interruption of the construction work can be avoided – even if in many cases these are not really unexpected, they can be a source of irritation for both investors and archaeologists. Trial excavations, combined with geophysical surveys and, in a few exceptional cases, aerial photos should precede the start of a construction project since these can be of aid in determining the archaeological features of a larger territory before it is built up. In Budapest, for example, the good contact between most of the district self-governments and the Budapest History Museum ensured that the formerly unknown areas of Aquincum, the seat of the Roman province of Pannonia, were identified at Budaújlak, the Filatori dam and in the Csúcshegy area (Budapest III, Óbuda). A continuous monitoring is obviously necessary to regularly check and document the actual condition of archaeologically important areas. At present, only the outstandingly important archaeological areas are included in this survey.

Modern European heritage protection and the European practice of urban archaeology can hardly be conceived without a presentation of the findings of the excavations to the scholarly community, the general public and, also, the investors (Fig. 17). Suffice it here to quote Aquincumi Füzetek, published at regular intervals since 1995, containing reports about the recent results of the investigations at Aquincum, the Roman predecessor of Budapest. The publication of the excavation findings is not only an academic question, but also an ethical one. József Korek once remarked that “research cannot be a goal in itself – research is only valuable if it serves the public.”

THE PROTECTION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE IN HUNGARY

Mihály Nagy

The concept of archaeological heritage is relatively new in Hungary: its first mention in an official document can be found in...
found in the so-called Cultural Act of 1997. In common usage the word ‘find’ denotes objects recovered from the earth, water, etc., that constitute a source material for archaeology. This expression, however, is not precise since in certain cases ‘find’ only referred to movable objects (this sense of the word is also common in a few other European countries). In contrast, the word ‘heritage’ covers both the movable and the immovable relics and, what is even more important in terms of source value, their relation to each other. Commenting on a draft bill on movable relics, Baron Gyula Forster (Fig. 18), the one-time chairman of the National Committee of Monuments, defined ‘finds’ as archaeological objects, as well as organic and inorganic remains with a scientific value. Similarly to treasure troves, these could be considered ownerless (res nullius) in the legal sense.

A distinction is drawn between movable and immovable relics and monuments in legal parlance. The former also included archaeological finds in certain periods, but in Forster’s concept only artworks and artistic creations of the applied arts were assigned to this category. Earlier efforts tended to concentrate on objects that could be placed in collections, rather than on the site from which they had been recovered (although we now know that the position and context of a find is at least as important as the find itself). One consequence of this approach was that the immovable archaeological relics brought to light during earth-moving operations came under the same consideration as the hidden sections of an extant building: they were not regarded as ownerless goods, but as part of the immovable property that concealed them.

BEGINNINGS

Although there is evidence for the collection of archaeological finds from the close of the 15th century, the institutional protection of the Hungarian archaeological heritage can only be dated from the mid-19th century. Disregarding a few exceptions, only the objects wrought of precious metal were considered valuable from among the archaeological finds recovered from the earth in the Middle Ages. The changes in the determination of who had ownership rights to the finds must also be briefly mentioned in a historical overview of the protection of the archaeological heritage, especially since the restrictions on ownership rights often hindered the legal protection of archaeological finds.

Forster argued that “the primary method of acquiring ownership rights is appropriation, one variant of this being finding or discovery. This also applies to treasure troves, the common sense principle being that ownerless goods pass into the ownership of the first acquirer. However, this is in contradiction to the indirect mode of appropriation, namely the principle according to which any accretion passes into the possession of the owner of the original property – and since treasure troves are regarded as an accretion, the right of acquisition lies with the owner of the land.” Since the finder of a treasure trove is not necessarily the owner of the land, both can – at least theoretically – lay claim to the treasure. Hidden objects, whose ownership could not be established, fell under the same consideration as the goods of inestate persons, in other words, they reverted to the royal treasury. The ownership rights to a treasure trove had to be established with respect to the interests of these three parties.

The earliest discussion of ownership rights in relation to a treasure trove in Hungary can be found in a charter issued in 1229, recording that the finders of a treasure trove were summoned by the Bishop of Várad since – neglecting their duty – they failed to report the treasure trove and had thus robbed the king. Other instances of the discovery of treasure troves are also known from the Middle Ages and the post-medieval period. Although the details of these discoveries were not always recorded, what clearly emerges is that the owner of the land and, in some cases, the king himself laid claim to these treasure troves or a part of them.

A royal decree issued in 1776 opened a new era in the legislation concerning treasure troves in Hungary. This decree was in effect the adoption of Austrian legislative practice. According to the decree, one-third of the treasure trove went to the Treasury, one-third to the owner of the land and one-third to the finder. This only applied to bullions of outstanding value; however, since a royal decree from 1777 stated that the Treasury did not lay claim to one-third of treasure troves whose value was less than 150 forints, treasure troves falling in this category would be equally divided between the finder and the owner of the land. At the same time, the consideration of the academic value of these finds is reflected by the fact that a few coins from one of these treasure troves were reserved for the Royal and Imperial Coin Collection, and the finder and the owner of the land were recompensed from the Treasury of the Hungarian Chamber. The practice of dividing treasure troves into three parts remained a common practice in Hungary until 1949, even though the claim of the Treasury to its one-third remained legally unfounded since the royal decrees had never been promulgated by Hungarian Parliament.

A decree of the Royal Chancellery issued in 1798 stipulated that ancient coins with a value of less than 150 forints and even hoards that were worthless had to be reported. The idea behind the extension of the concept of treasure trove in this manner was to ensure the acquisition of antiquities that had an academic value for the imperial collections.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE HUNGARIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM

November 25, 1802, is regarded as an important milestone in the struggle for the creation of an independent national culture. On that day Count Ferenc Széchényi (Fig. 19) announced his decision to donate his private
Archaeological research in Hungary

collection to the nation. This collection, whose curatorship was entrusted to the Palatine József in the foundation deed, became the basis of the collections in the Hungarian National Museum and the major public collections in other museums that later grew out of the museum. The Széchényi collection also included an assortment of archaeological finds; the collection of antiquities was continued after the foundation of the museum. When the Sistaróc (Șiștarovăț, Romania) find was handed over to the Chamber in 1813, the Palatine announced the royal decision that the National Museum and the University of Pest had the right to make their own selection of the coins rejected by Vienna (the finder and the owner of the land were recompensed by the museum and the university). This was the first instance that two Hungarian public collections could make a selection of articles from a find assemblage discovered in Hungary.

1846 was remarkable for two outstanding events. At the congress of the Hungarian Physicists and Nature Explorers held in Kassa, Imre Henszlman called attention to the importance of the protection of Hungarian antiquities. The same year the cataloguing of archaeological finds, similar to the present practice, was introduced in the Hungarian National Museum. Articles recovered from a particular site were regarded as parts of the same find assemblage; the description of the finds, accompanied by their drawing and exact measurements, enabled the unambiguous identification of the finds in question.

THE ROLE OF THE HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

At the beginning of the next year, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences announced the need for the protection of monuments, a most urgent task since ancient monuments often fell prey to various construction projects or sheer indifference. The main purpose was to “kindle an awareness of history, to shed light on ancient Hungarian culture and to upraise national pride”. The circle of monuments in need of protection was also defined: the relics of the national past (up to the Szatmár Peace Treaty) that were reflections of ancient national culture and glory. These relics included buildings, carvings, casts, tumuli, paintings, engravings, weapons, furniture, vessels and jewellery. Although the protection of these relics was envisioned within the legal framework defined by the academy’s statutes, an appeal to the patriotism of Hungarian citizens was also made.

The announcement did not go unheeded as shown by the fact that as head of the National Defence Committee during the 1848–49 Revolution and War of Independence, Lajos Kossuth issued a decree on November 30, 1848, stipulating that the antiquities found during the construction of military defenceworks be sent to the Hungarian National Museum together with a description of their findspot and
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the depth at which they had been found; a second report was to be sent to the secretary of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The archaeological finds sent to the museum on the territory of Contra Aquincum during the construction of the Pest defenceworks indicate that Kossuth's orders were observed. The first systematic archaeological excavations can be dated from the same time. János Érdy, Keeper of the Antiquities Collection of the Hungarian National Museum, unearthed the grave of Béla III and his wife, Anna of Antioch, among the ruins of the royal basilica in Székesfehérvár in December, 1848 (Fig. 20).

After the crushing of War of Independence, Francis Joseph I issued an imperial decree on December 31, 1850, for the creation of a committee (the so-called Centralkommission) to seek out major architectural monuments and to organize their preservation. The authority of this committee extended over the entire territory of the Monarchy, including Hungary, and remained in effect until November, 1866.

A proposal was submitted to the general assembly of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in January, 1858, for the creation of an Archaeological Committee within the Historical Department. Similarly to the appeal of 1847, the expression ‘monuments’ denoted “relics of antiquarian value” originating from the period before the Szatmár Peace Treaty. It was also decided that the Committee would publish its own journal, Archaeologiai Közlemények, the first archaeological periodical in Hungary.

One of the concessions made by Austrian absolutism during one of its periodic crises was the proclamation of a constitution known as the October Diploma – granting the provinces of the empire greater autonomy in their internal affairs – on October 20, 1860, by the Emperor Francis Joseph I. Even though the pre-1848 government bodies were restored in Hungary, Hungarian Parliament ultimately refused to recognize the legality of the October Diploma in 1861. (This date also marked the end of the activity of the Centralkommission in Hungary.) In 1861 the Consilium requested that the Hungarian Academy of Sciences create a Hungarian committee similar to the Centralkommission. The Academy, however, favoured the establishment of a permanent committee, whose members would include a representative of the government, for the simple reason that the Academy had no wish to become a government organization through a committee of this kind. The debates over this issue went on for some four years without reaching a final decision. During this time, the archaeological finds and treasure troves were taken to Vienna until 1867; Hungarian collections could make their selection from among the finds only after the imperial collection had taken its pick. On the initiatives of the Minister of Transport, the finds brought to light during the construction of railways and canals were reported to the appropriate authorities who, depending on the location of the construction, notified the Hungarian or the Transylvanian National Museum.

LEGISLATION

Imre Henszlmann’s draft bill from 1869 proposed the creation of a National Archaeological Inspectorate that would be responsible for movable antiquities and of a National Archaeological Committee that would act as a counselling body to the minister. This draft bill represented a major advance regarding the principle of provenance. Although the Hungarian National Museum still enjoyed absolute primacy in the selection of finds for its collections, the country museums could now also keep some of the finds. The debate over the bill continued for many years, while the archaeological societies active in the Hungarian counties demanded that at least some of the finds discovered in their area of activity be given to their collections (Fig. 21).

In the meantime, article 366 of the Penal Code (Act V of 1878) regulated the negligence of reporting a treasure trove and illicit treasure hunting. The relevant article of the law defined ‘treasure’ as an antiquity with an inherent or an archaeological value, whose lawful owner could not be determined. This piece of legislation was designed to ensure the museums’ right of selecting and preserving the finds, as well as punishing any losses inflicted on the Treasury. Viewed from the perspective of the history of archaeological heritage protection, the concept of treasure was – in the sense used by the Penal Code – extended to every archaeological find.

The Upper House debated the draft bill submitted by Henszlmann on April 30, 1881. Arnold Ipolyi submitted an
amendment in which he proposed that the force of the bill also be extended to movable antiquities. Forster noted that “Minister Trefort, however, found it unnecessary to amend the text because, together with the Minister of Finance, he intended to introduce a separate bill on movable antiquities … [and] there was a fear that the inclusion of movable antiquities would fuel apprehensions that restrictions would be imposed on private property owing to the nature of the matter, and that even a favourable solution for immovable relics could be postponed for a long time.”

Act XXXIX on the preservation and maintenance of monuments was finally passed by both Houses of Parliament on May 24, 1881, more than a decade after the draft bill had been submitted. The protection of movable and immovable monuments was separated. Buildings and relics with a historical value lying in the ground (what would today be called the immovable elements of the archaeological heritage) were also included among the monuments as defined by the law; it was also stipulated that the owner or the user of the land must report the discovery of these monuments to the local authorities. The ministry would then decide whether or not the monument should be protected.

Forster noted that one weak point of the act was that it “restricted the concept of monuments to immovable goods, architectural monuments and their elements, a mistaken approach since this implied that only immovable objects and their constituent parts were to be regarded as monuments; it regrettably also projected the idea that even if a movable relic were to qualify as a monument from an academic or artistic point of view, or according to a general consensus, it would not be a monument according to the law.”

There was an attempt at the turn of the century to pass a piece of legislation that treated the various parts of the cultural heritage as an integral unit. In 1898, Gyula Forster was asked to work out a draft bill in which movable and immovable antiquities (the latter including also palaeozoological and anthropological relics) were treated together. József Hampel, Keeper of the Department of Coins and Antiquities of the Hungarian National Museum, was also asked for his comments. Hampel endorsed the idea of extending maximally the concept of archaeological find (“Every man-made product created before the period to which living memory extends is an antiquity”), and, for the sake of scholarship, he suggested that these be brought under the force of the law. Forster was concerned about the negative effects of the limitation of private ownership. In contrast to Hampel, his approach was more practical. His main intention was that historically and artistically important objects remain in the country, and he suggested that a separate fund be created in the state budget for purchasing the finds. (In his scheme the owner of the land and the finder divided the purchase price of the archaeological find between them.) He was also aware of the fact that the law would only be executable if Church goods were also included in the inventory since this would ensure the state’s right of preemption.

In 1912, the National Council of Museums and Libraries submitted a bill on movable antiquities; however, “Act XI on the regulation of the activity of museums, libraries and archives” was only passed in 1929. Article 44 of this act annulled article 366 of the 1878 Penal Code. Instead, article 18 stipulated the right of the Minister of Religion and Public Education to place a ban on excavating an area that concealed or had concealed archaeological, historical, anthropological, geological or palaeontological relics. Only the institution appointed by the Council of Hungarian National Collections was permitted to investigate these areas. The law also stipulated that stray finds and assemblages brought to light in the course of excavations not supervised by professionals had to be reported to the Hungarian National Museum either directly or through the local authorities. The finder of the archaeological relics and the owner of the land were to be recompensed up to a maximum of two-thirds of the value of the finds and this amount was to be divided equally between them.

This law remained in force until November, 1949, when it was replaced by Law-decree 13 on Museums and Monuments. For the first time, the protection of movable and immovable monuments was treated in the same law. This law also stipulated that accidentally discovered immovable or movable relics be reported to the National Centre of Museums and Monuments, either directly or through the local authorities. The Centre would then advise the Minister of Religion and Public Education on which monuments and areas of archaeological or historical significance should be protected by law. One new element in this law was that all immovable museal objects recovered from the ground were vested in the state treasury. Instead of the former recompensing for the finds, the Centre could offer a financial reward to the finder and the owner of the land. Monuments were again treated separately after the Minister of Housing and Public Construction created the National Inspectorate of Monuments and the Municipal Council of Budapest founded the Municipal Inspectorate of Monuments.

Law-decree 9 of 1963 (amended in 1975) on the protection of objects of museal value again regulated the protection of the archaeological heritage and declared that “all relics and monuments with a museal value lying in or recovered from the ground, from water or elsewhere are vested in the state”. This law-decree also stipulated that objects of museal value found accidentally had to be reported to the local council. One new provision in this respect was that instead of the national centre, the territorially competent (“designated”) museum had to be notified, which, after checking the site, determined whether the earth-moving operation that brought the find to light could be continued or not. The other tasks and duties of the former national centre were in part transferred to the Hungarian National Museum and in part to the Excavation Committee. As regards archaeological finds, the law-decree only held out the promise of a reward for the finder; the owner of the land was not mentioned.
THE PROTECTION OF THE IMMOVABLE HERITAGE AT PRESENT

In 1992, the Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development created the National Agency for the Protection of Monuments (OMvH) to perform the necessary tasks concerning monument protection and determined the tasks and duties of the Agency in the protection of monuments and the supervision of construction projects, as well as the tasks and duties of the Directorate of Monument Inspection.

Hungarian Parliament enacted the present law on cultural heritage protection in 1997 (Act LIV on monument protection and Act CXL on the protection of cultural goods and museum institutions, on public library service and public education). The latter stipulates that the minister performs certain tasks through the Directorate of Cultural Heritage under his supervision. Certain tasks of the ministry (the registration of protected areas in the land registries, of the Hungarian National Museum (proposals for the protection of sites, inventories) and of the Excavation Committee (excavation licences) were transferred to the Directorate of Cultural Heritage, founded in 1998. The Directorate is an administrative authority, although in the case of areas with an archaeological significance, the authoritative rights are practised by the county museums.

The institutional framework for the protection of the immovable cultural heritage (archaeology and monument protection) was fundamentally transformed in 1998, when responsibility for the protection of the national cultural heritage was transferred to the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage. As parts of these structural changes, a Department of Monuments was organized within the ministry that incorporated the Department of Archaeological Monuments Protection and the Department of Built Monuments Protection. The main tasks of the ministry include the creation and maintenance of a database, regular funding, the creation of a network for the maintenance of monuments and a high level public education.

Although Acts LIV and CXL of 1997 were enacted after a careful preparatory work, the experiences gained in this field since their enactment indicate that further amendments to these laws are necessary. Following the creation of the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage in the summer of 1998, a few minor amendments were proposed. It soon became obvious that these could hardly lead to a modern regulation and a new draft bill for the protection of the archaeological heritage was drawn up in early 2000. Act LXIV of 2001 on the protection of the cultural heritage that set heritage protection in a broader framework was passed by Parliament on June 19. The new bill incorporated many new elements, such as the inventory, the principle of sustainable usage, the general protection of all known archaeological sites and the various categories of protection in the case of archaeological sites placed under protection by ministerial decree. The act created the Agency of Cultural Heritage Protection by merging the National Agency for the Protection of Monuments and the Directorate of Cultural Heritage; the new office started its activity on October 8, 2001. The new agency has nine regional offices.

INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE

Hungary signed the international conventions after a significant delay in the past (for example the World Heritage Convention of 1972 was ratified and promulgated in 1985, the Malta Convention of 1992 on the protection of archaeological heritage in 2000). European integration calls for a legal harmonization in this field also, and thus every effort must be made for the adoption of international conventions on heritage protection in Hungary, as well as of the European practice in the reorganization of the institutional system entrusted with heritage protection.

Two related tendencies can be observed in the developed European countries. On the one hand, there is a gradual increase in the number of the protected areas that can be classified as one of three categories (national, regional or local). The regulations concerning protection are less rigorous when moving from the national to the local level and this categorization also affects the distribution of central funds. On the other hand, parallel to the rise in the number of the monuments and their classification, there is a tendency to involve regional and local governments in heritage protection by reallocating certain tasks to these authorities. In spite of a definite tendency towards decentralization, a certain degree of centralization is nonetheless maintained – for example in the case of national monuments – with the necessary tasks performed by the government through a deconcentrated organization.

The updating of the planned inventory of protected monuments and archaeological sites in Hungary will no doubt lead to an increase in the number of protected areas. A modernized institutional system will no doubt be able to cope with the growing number of tasks. The creation of this network and the legislative background will be one of the main tasks in the new millennium.